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GUILD "SOCIALISM." A GOOD THING FOR CAPITALIST RATEPAYERS.

The "London Building Guild" commenced its existence in July, 1920, by promising to show government officials and builders how to build houses more cheaply and at the same time pay their workers for loss of time through sickness or inclement weather.

An offspring of the "Guild Socialist" movement, it endorsed the principles and promises of Guild Socialism, claiming that the workers themselves would control, and that by the growth and extension of their movement the workers would gradually gain control over the whole of industry and be enabled thereby to set up a new order of society in which the capitalist would be entirely eliminated.

Because of the demand for workers' dwellings the Building Guild rapidly outstripped the guilds of other industries. Their contracts, according to the "Building Guildsman," May, 1922, spread over 70 Guild committees, amount to £3,000,000. Notwithstanding this rapid growth, however, it is questionable whether the Guild is financially sound. The Co-operative Wholesale Society, concerned about the competition between their building department and the Guilds, have declined to finance them further, and the Guilds have retaliated by placing their insurance business elsewhere. The Federation of Building Trade Operatives have come to the rescue of the Guild for the time being, but the latter is evidently in a tight corner financially as they are making desperate appeals for loans. The June number of the "Building Guildsman," displays on its

cover in bold type the words, "Lend promptly or the Guild can't develop." Before doing so, however, the trade unionist, at any rate, will do well to critically examine the need for its development.

What, in the first place, would the workers say of a builder, or any other capitalist, who, while constantly boasting of the extension of his business, appealed to them for loans in order to carry out the work? Yet this is what the Guild does; because under it the workers organise themselves merely to give service. The capitalist is eliminated but the Guild does not get the profit, while the local authorities get their houses at the bare cost of labour and materials. The Guild contract, according to Mr. Ernest Selley, writing in the "Building Guild in London," is described as follows:—

"The Guild form of contract, as approved by the Ministry of Health for Municipal Housing Schemes, provides that the price paid by the local authorities shall be the prime cost of material and labour at standard rates. To this sum, 6 per cent. is added to cover head office administration, plant, insurance, and, if necessary, interest on borrowed capital. In addition, there is an allowance of £40 a house to enable the Guild to guarantee continuous pay to its workmen in all contingencies. Thus, with full publicity as to costs, the Guild removes all doubt as to the existence of invisible margins and hidden profits."

In the London District Area committees are set up consisting of delegates from trade unions and there is also a board of directors elected by the trade unions affiliated to the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives. The board is

responsible for the appointment of managers and headquarters staff while the local committees make arrangements for the supply of labour. Members of the committees can be selected by the committee itself, to fill the best jobs without reference to their qualifications, and the way is open for wire pulling and jobbery. It is easy to see that whatever line the committees adopt there is bound to be friction over this question. Where jobs are concerned there is always competition and jealousy, together with numerous charges of corruption, true or untrue.

The business of the Guilds is carried on by means of borrowed capital, the interest on which is a portion of the surplus value produced by the Guild workers. Whether the Guild obtains a share of this surplus value for the extension of their business, or for any other purpose, does not transpire. In building working-class dwellings, however, they profess to be prompted by a desire to keep the cost of building low in order that the rents may be low; but the corporations they build for are under no obligation in this respect, and whatever profits are made by them on the letting go to the relief of capitalist ratepayers. Neither corporations nor guildsmen can any longer pretend that the workers are affected by reductions in rates, when every reduction in the cost of living—even where sliding scales are not in operation—is a signal for a reduction in wages.

Maintenance during sickness and inclement weather is made the most of by Guild propagandists. Really it is their only asset, though such payment is not confined to the Guilds nor does it represent a big slice out of profits. In itself it is certainly not worth the tremendous propaganda of confusion carried on by Guild Socialists. As an immediate benefit it is small compensation for the extra amount of unemployment likely to be caused by the general adoption of Guild methods—if all the Guild tales of quantitative results are true. Moreover, the Guilds can only guarantee employment while they obtain contracts; to do this they must be cheaper than capitalist firms.

They must enter the competitive market with the ordinary capitalist—who only differs from them in that he does not promise a millenium when he has captured all the trade—adopting all his methods for intensive exploitation of their wage slaves.

In fact they have already arrived at this point and the need for coercing and hustling their workers is not only admitted but is seriously discussed in the May issue of the "Building Guildsman," by Mr. S. G. Hobson, who says:—

"If we succeed in making Labour the first charge upon the industry and in consequence establish industrial maintenance; and if, as a result, production falls to an uneconomic level, one of the pillars of the Guild edifice would be seriously shaken. No use blinking that!

"As a matter of fact, it is not true. Guild production, generally stated, is in excess of capitalist production, whilst there can be no question of Guild quality. But it is true that there are men working on Guild contracts who are without conviction of any kind, and who regard the Guild very much as they would regard an employer. Let us be quite frank: these men are a danger to Guild development. Whatever the cost, they must be dealt with.

"There still remains, however, the broad question: Must Guild discipline be maintained by the usual Capitalist methods of dismissal, driving, threats, and (wherever possible) Taylorism, piece-work, and bonus? Or is there a better way?"

We see, therefore, that it is merely a question of the method, there is no doubt about the necessity of getting more out of the workers even though "Guild production, generally stated, is in excess of capitalist production."

The capitalist nature of the Guild is fully demonstrated in the above quotation; particularly in the assertion that production must be kept at an economic level. The cry of the capitalist everywhere and always.

The quality of Guild work, too, is always stressed by their advocates; but this is a doubtful advantage from the workers standpoint. Many workers owe their jobs to the fact that capitalists, as a rule, pay more attention to cheapness and quantity than they do to quality, with the result that expenditure on repairs and maintenance becomes necessary.

Again, why should the employee of the Guild regard it as anything else but an employer? What else is it? Is he not exploited by the Guild? The Guild committee may give their services free. Their customers may obtain a better and cheaper commodity; but all that only proves the Guild worker's more intensive exploitation, because, after all, he only gets wages; no more and no less than other capitalist employees.

Guild Socialism is a fraud on the workers because it promises to eliminate the capitalist while it retains capitalism. It patches up

the wages system with maintenance, instead of showing that wages, or the price of labour power, must always be but a mere fraction of the wealth produced by the workers.

Guild Socialists promise betterment for the workers here and now, and an easy transition from Capitalism to Socialism. Already their chief concern is for the financial success of their business contracts and not at all for the education of the workers in Socialism, without which there can be no transition, easy or otherwise.

F. F.

SHELLEY.

IN HIS WAY, ONE OF US.

Innumerable days of my life I wish to forget; three days I will always remember with joy. On one of those latter days I read *The Communist Manifesto* for the first time. On another of the days I saw some of Van Gogh's pictures at the first exhibition in this country of the work of the post-impressionists of France. On the third, and almost the last, of my joy-days my father gave me a book, "The Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley."

Shelley is the poet I care for beyond all other poets. He dreamed, loved, wept, and sang; he helped his friends and those who were not his friends — he gave heaps of money away — he went his own way — none could tie him down — he was a wild yet gentle man, and his immortal "sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought."

I have for years read Shelley. I have not come across a more useful or beautiful purifying influence than Shelley's work. And in his day he was a Revolutionist.

A Revolutionist! Never mind . . . he's been dead a hundred years. Moreover, he believed if you only quietly proclaimed your ideas all would run smoothly. For a short time the rulers' soldiers might "slash and stab and maim and hew" as they did at Peterloo. The business of the rebel was to look earnestly and pityingly upon the armed men. The soldiers would then sheathe their swords—the rulers would recognise the immemorial injustice done to the toilers, be purified by the martyrdom of the masses, and make amends for their tyranny. Shelley

didn't live to hear of the Commune of Paris. He couldn't possibly have seen photographs in the picture papers of Lloyd George, hat in hand, before the Cenotaph.

No . . . Such an idea of passive resistance was born of his own instinctive gentleness. Could Shelley, even with his wonderful mind, imagine the depths of fiendishness to which a ruling class will sink so they may keep all their privileges? He knew the schools of his day planted base ideas; he knew the churches were used to muddle the minds of potential rebels, and he exposed the crime; he fathomed the duplicity of Castlereagh and Pitt and Ellenborough, but I wonder if it was possible for any man in Shelley's time to accurately picture the Society of to-day? For crafty brutality there was nothing like it in the old Roman days of slavery—in the morning of capitalism. The despots were somewhat inexperienced; the arch-fiends and the master hypocrites of the afternoon of capitalism were unborn.

May be, inadvertently by innuendo, I am unjust. Perhaps Shelley advocated no definite "tactic" of Revolution. He looked around him and brooded upon the loveliness and the mighty riddles of the universe. He went down many rivers and came upon mountains. Throughout the year he was out in the open air. He became familiar with the silence and solitude of winter. He came to know the colours and noises and songs of the whole year by heart. And yet—"my fellow man is in chains"—he said. Not all the "unpremeditated art" of Nature, not all the music of a summer's sky, could make Shelley deaf to the rattle of the iron. Million upon million died knowing nothing of the mystery and grandeur and joy of life. The milk and honey were possessed by liars, traitors, and fools—to the multitude, the dust and ashes.

Shelley wished everyone to be free. Have not all men worth their salt wished the same? All considerate men at some time or other have wished to "re-mould things nearer to the heart's desire." But the strange man whose boat got upset and broken in the Bay of Spezzia in 1822 was one of the most constant, indefatigable, and impassioned advocates of Freedom the world has ever known. His music of thunder and sweetness, love of liberty and antipathy to tyranny, has helped many a one to a realisation of the infamy of capi-

talist class rule. Shelley prepares the mind for the easy acceptance of the principles of Socialism. He fills the mind with a wild hatred of slavery. Marx gives that hate direction. Shelley was the trumpet that sang to battle. Marx supplies us with the weapons. We are encouraged, inspired by the writer of "Prometheus," "Queen Mab," "The Masque of Anarchy," "The Odes" . . . we are awakened, infuriated by the thundrous, supremely impassioned music of revolt—then comes the cloudless reasoning of the philosophic, scientific Marx, saying: "Go here—go there—destroy and build in this way."

So we march forward with the times. The incessant songs help us on our way. They comfort us in the prisons, they give us heart when things seem still as death, they are the accompaniment to our words at the street corners. It is a strong, sweet and formidable music that is ours. It is the music of a whole storm—beginning, middle with its might, and end with its peace. The calm has yet to come. It *will* come if the workers "Defy power which seems omnipotent," as Shelley says, in the way Marx suggests.

In letters, leaflets, pamphlets, and poetry Shelley criticised the vile institutions of his day. He wrote exquisitely of comradeship and trenchantly of all forms and phases of injustice. Blockheads advised "Mr. Shelley" to renounce his "pernicious doctrines." But "Mr. Shelley" was wilful—in comparison with some contemporaneous public men, he was quite a naughty boy. Even after advice from "The Quarterly" he obstinately wrote poetry, "The Masque of Anarchy," in which he urged a nation of quiet slaves to "Rise like lions" in unvanquishable number, shatter their chains, and control the world and all its wealth.

That happened long ago. What would such an irreconcilable poet say to-day. Far as I can remember, one of his songs is a little like this:—

"Sow seed, but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth, let no imposter heap;
Weave robes, let not the idle wear;
Forge arms, in your defence to bear."

Would he have been with Derby, Snowden, Churchill, and Macdonald on the recruiting platform in 1914? Would he, who succoured an unhappy prostitute, have smiled like a very Thomas upon the systems which make women prefer the streets to the workshop? Would he have written like Rudyard Kip-

ling? Can a bird singing innocently among the clouds become a bird of prey?

Shelley was thirty years old when he went down in the waters of Italy. Think of the volume of his work—think of the way he strived to overthrow the tyranny he detested. Though we are not quite as Shelley was, still we can work as hard. His genius was particular and inimitable—his energy we may have. Francis Bacon loved roses. In their season they were on his tables every day. Macauley says that by putting roses upon our tables we may in one way at least resemble the philosopher. If resemblance to such men is desirable, then let us work hard for the emancipation of humanity, and in that way resemble Shelley. To get a rose in a jug on a table is fairly easy—the idler can do it, and then be as much like Lord Bacon as Churchill with a silk hat is like a statesman or an ape with a crown is like a king. But hard work upon right lines will prove manhood.

Shelley has played his part in the great awakening of men; just as Marx played his, as we play ours, as all our readers can play theirs. The scientist, philosopher, and singer, age by age, so far as the development of Society would permit, have contributed to the freeing of our thoughts. They have given us ecstasy and knowledge. And the selfish ruling class cannot understand this. Ecstasy and knowledge, music and wisdom mean as little to such people as Gallipoli and Russia or work and wages. Shelley liked such people much as we do; much as G.B.S. likes roast pork and a bottle of Bass.

But even if Shelley and Marx and lots of others have done their best, we still have a lot of cross-country marching to do. We will have to tread over much rough ground, and there will be a good many nights in between now and the end. Yet we must constantly go forward with a clear vision of that we wish to achieve. We will go on with light hearts; for have we not the companionship of the wonderful singer of all time? The "Unvanquishable number" will assemble in some night or other. The principles which, when accepted, mean Freedom will be understood by great numbers, and the wounds of the world will be healed by Socialism. In plain language, that means the people who now own the land and the machinery of wealth production will be dispossessed. It means the workers will take

possession of the land and machinery necessary for the production of wealth—and wealth will be produced in abundance and distributed among the people who produce wealth. Even that is not stated so plainly as some writers for the *Standard* can state it. Read what my comrades say; study our principles thoroughly.

Finis! And yet I would say more. I would say that we find happiness in our work. There is fellowship among the workers for Socialism, life in the principles of Socialism, and selfishness and death elsewhere. Emulate the zeal and heroism of Shelley; fill your hearts, as they say, with his emotions and music, get a grip on the principles which actuate us, endeavour to make your fellow workers see the truth of your belief, and kick the capitalist along "The primrose path to the everlasting bonfire." H. M. M.

"WHAT COULD YOU DO WITH £600?"

The above question is extracted from an advertisement which is appearing daily in the Capitalist Press.

In case there should be any members of the working class seriously puzzling their brains as to what they could do in the event of such an enormous amount of wealth being thrown at them, the £1,000 Fund Committee is prepared to supply the answer FREE OF CHARGE to any person or persons disposing of one BOOK of stamps and remitting the proceeds thereof within ONE MONTH from date of issue.

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A.S.C./22:8:22

PRODUCING AND PAYING.

A GRIM FAIRY TALE.

When discussing with the average member of the working class, or at meetings that bring forward their opinions, as soon as the Socialist attempts to show the futility of concern with this or that expenditure of the master class, he is invariably asked, "But don't we pay for everything?" and this to the questioner appears an obvious truth.

Indignation is often aroused and shown when it is pointed out that the working class cannot have any part in the paying or contributing towards the colossal expense of running the capitalist system of society. True, some may feel the injustice of a system which on all sides presents itself as a glaring contrast between stupendous wealth and sheer stark naked poverty. True, others may dimly perceive that the existence of this wealth is due to the efforts of the working class. That at the docks, on the railways, in the mine or the office, the activities of the master class are unknown—from the highest to the lowest, skilled or unskilled, all are workers. If, however, those who think thus, do not carry their observations and enquiries farther, such knowledge remains superficial, and will lead to wrong conclusions. They must go deeper and seek to understand what portion of the wealth that is produced accrues to the working class. They will then know that they CANNOT PAY either directly or indirectly towards the upkeep of the very system that exploits them; though it is quite desirable from the master class point of view to foster the belief that they can and do. When we speak of the working class, we mean the class that works as the name implies. This presupposes a non-working class. The former are without any property in the means of life, and have only their bodily activities to sell in order to live. The latter own the earth and all upon it (machinery, mines, raw material, railways, etc.).

Wealth used to exploit labour power for profit is capital and its owners are capitalists. Capital is therefore merely wealth used for a particular purpose and is itself the product of wage labour.

Now the working class have only three methods of existing, either begging, stealing or working. Obviously the first two methods cannot become general, and to a small section, begging, unless upon a large

scale (such as the Salvation Army and various charitable organisations) is a rather poor occupation; while to steal, after everything worth stealing has been stolen, with politically controlled force to maintain its ownership, is also a foolish proceeding. There is, therefore, only that enervating pastime left to the workers, to work—for somebody else. And what does work give when obtainable? Wages. And what are they? Marx and Engels wrote in 1848: "The average price of wage labour is the minimum wage, i.e., the sum of the necessities of life, absolutely needful to keep the worker in life as a worker. Thus what the wage earner appropriates by his labour is just as much as is necessary to assure him a bare existence" (Communist manifesto.) But the worker is paid in money, and it is this fact that disguises from him the exploiting nature of the transaction, the buying of his labour power. What the master really buys is the full use of that energy, but when it is expended in the production of wealth, the worker produces much more in value than the value of his own necessities of life expressed in price as wages. Six hundred years ago a man could produce in twelve weeks labour sufficient to sustain himself and family for a whole year (Thorold Rogers.) How much greater must be his productivity to-day with the aid of steam, electricity, machinery, and every labour saving device science has placed at his disposal. What the worker produces over and above the value of what he receives as wages the Socialist calls "SURPLUS VALUE." And it is from this source, whether it takes the form of Rent, Interest, or Profit that the masters MUST PAY.

The worker is robbed of the major portion of the wealth he alone produces and is left relatively poorer year by year as that wealth increases. All improvements in the means and methods of wealth production must benefit the comparatively few owners of those means, for to them belong the results. While the workers remain labour power sellers they cannot command more than the price resulting from that sale (wages).

If the master class can persuade the workers to continue in the belief that the latter have a part in the paying of national or local expenditure, they can help to disguise the exploiting nature of their system. The worker cannot pay out of what he

NEVER RECEIVES, though at times he argues that he pays indirectly by consuming such things as tobacco, beer, etc. Even here again it is a question of wages. Whatever the sum total of the prices of the necessities required to reproduce the worker (including some sort of entertainment and small luxuries) must be given to him first in his wage, otherwise his labour power deteriorates. When prices rose during the war, bonuses had to be given to cover the increased cost of living; when they fell to any extent bonuses disappeared, or in other words, wages came down. The sliding scale is another example of the adjustment of wages to the cost of living.

Capitalist agents often tell the workers that it is the employed that must support the unemployed. Their object is twofold, to delude the workers, and endeavour to keep as low as possible their masters expenditure. At times they give the game away by stating that it pays better to receive "Guardians relief" than work for wages, and that's saying something. How little the reduction of such expenditure concerns the workers was evidenced recently at Poplar, when certain Labour members of the Council went to prison, avowedly in the interests of the workers, but we find the truth in strange places, thus! "We have in our possession a return showing that the 'large ratepayers' actually saved in rates £300,000, as a result of the 'Poplar Labour Borough Council.' One firm in Millwall saved over £3,000, and another in Bow £1,222." (Ed., "East London Pioneer," April, 1922). Certainly good for the "large" ratepayers.

No, fellow workers, if the paying were yours the masters would trouble little about the expense much less spend large sums in propaganda upon matters which didn't concern them. What concerns you is how long you intend to be the victims of profits and production for sale. Understand your importance in society and your historic mission as real men and women and then organise for Socialism. Social ownership of the means of producing wealth for use and not profit. That will destroy the power of the few to dominate the lives of the masses. The working "class" will then be abolished because all but the child and the feeble will take part in the useful necessary work of society and all will enjoy the benefits such social life will give. Mac.

"REMEDIES."

The remedies which were propounded as a solution for the slump in trade which has prevailed are now well known. First it was "increased production," "reduced wages," "longer hours," and "Governmental Economy."

A year or more is surely a reasonable period in which to test the efficacy of these remedies. Without doubt they have all been given a fair trial. The workers have increased their output, not so much as a result of the exhortations of Clynes, Brownlee, etc., as from economic necessity. Every worker knows that the enormous number of unemployed is used as a means to compel him to work harder. In almost every factory the workers have to compete with each other in order to retain their jobs; the slowest are the first to be put off. Wages have been reduced wholesale, and hours, in many cases, have been extended. Also some attempt has been made by the Government to curtail its expenditure.

That these expedients have failed to cure the slump is unquestionable. And no wonder!

The slump is brought about by the excess of supply of commodities over the demand for them; therefore to increase production is but to worsen the situation. Every reduction in wages, in general, reduces the purchasing power of the working class, who constitute the enormous majority of the population. A great cause of the lack of demand in relation to the supply of commodities is the fact that the workers receive in the form of wages only a small portion of the total wealth they produce. To take a step, then, which must lead to a further reduction in the demand for commodities is a peculiar way of solving a problem which, from the point of view of the capitalist, requires an increase in demand for its solution.

The latest nostrum trotted out by the capitalists through their press was "reduce income tax!"

"This humble petition sheweth that whereas grave distress is being caused by the existing high taxation, which prevents the revival of trade and the return of prosperity to the nation, thereby also keeping in a state of unemployment a large number of people."

This solemn nonsense is part of a petition to Parliament which the workers were called upon by the "Daily Mail" to sign.

I have copied it from the "Weekly Dispatch" (30.4.22) and have searched the paper through for any proof, or argument in support of, the assertions made in the petition.

How the spending of the shilling in the pound by the capitalist income tax payers on champagne, etc., instead of by the Government on salaries to civil servants, etc., can have any effect in relieving unemployment is nowhere explained. The usual argument urged in favour of lightening the capitalists "burden" of taxation is that by so doing more money would be at their disposal thus enabling them to provide more employment for the working class. It is only necessary to point to the capital lying idle or being but partly used at the present time in order to show the fallacy of this argument. If capital already existing in the form of means of production, raw material, etc., cannot be used, obviously there is little room for the investment of new capital.

But even if the argument were sound, the workers, by supporting the agitation and signing the petition are acquiescing in their own exploitation. When the capitalist "provides employment," he does so only in order to exploit, to rob those whom he employs.

This depression is a world wide phenomenon. Capitalists are compelled to reduce the prices of their commodities and curtail production. This means to them a considerably reduced income; to the smaller capitalists it spells imminent bankruptcy. Each capitalist, then, is compelled to seek for means to compensate himself for these losses. The methods he adopts to this end are, urging the workers to work harder, thereby increasing their output, and therefore the surplus value appropriated by the capitalist. Reductions in wages have the same effect; less for the worker, more for the capitalist. The desire of the capitalist to reduce his expenses has given rise to the demand for Government economy and reduced taxation.

The support of the workers for these measures has been gained by telling them that only by these means, reducing the cost of production and so enabling the capitalist to compete more successfully with foreign rivals could any improvement in their (the workers) position be brought about. This

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OFFICIAL NOTICE.

All communications for the Executive Committee, Subscriptions for the **SOCIALIST STANDARD**, Articles, and Correspondence submitted for insertion therein, should be addressed—The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1, to whom Money Orders should be made payable.

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The Socialist Standard,

SEPTEMBER



1922

SHALL WE MOURN?

On August 15th the newspapers displayed large headlines announcing the death of Lord Northcliffe, the newspaper magnate. It is an interesting sidelight on the sham hostilities of the papers, that those who were lately his bitter enemies—on paper!—are now deploring his loss as that of "a great national figure and a prince of journalists."

Working men who ponder over the actions of such "great men" are not moved to deplore his loss. It is to them but the loss of one who has climbed upon their shoulders; a member of the privileged class; a staunch supporter of the evil that Capitalism signifies—the havoc of wars and the miseries of peace.

The daily Press, without exception, exists in the main, not merely to give news "calculated to attract at the moment the legitimate interest of a reasonable man or woman," as one paper would have us believe, but to provide a source of income to the proprietors. In doing this, it endeavours to gloss over the worst features of Capitalism and keep the workers satisfied with the present system of wealth production, which brings ease and comfort to the propertied few, and overwork and misery to the property-less many.

A large slice of the revenue of a newspaper comes from advertisements. A paper

that cannot command a large circle of advertisers stands little chance of surviving.

Broadly speaking, those who advertise in the newspapers (we are referring to large advertisers, of course) favour the paper having the largest circulation among those interested in such advertisers' wares; at the same time, being Capitalists, they will fight shy of a paper publishing information likely to harm their enterprises. Consequently the proprietors of a newspaper have two points of prime importance to bear in mind in the conduct of their journals—to obtain as large a circulation as possible, and, at the same time, to avoid, if possible, publishing anything that may offend their advertisers. The importance of the latter point many an Editor has learnt to his cost.

From the above we can see what attitude a flourishing newspaper must of necessity take towards the workers. It must side with the masters in keeping the workers in servitude. The news we are favoured with is selected with this end in view, though the papers dare not keep back some matters without risking a fall in the circulation upon which largely depends the quantity and value of the advertisements received.

Lord Northcliffe was a successful newspaper proprietor because his papers were conducted with a careful eye to these points; in other words, he was an enemy of the working class.

How much the Press is concerned about the workers is illustrated by the statement of one paper (*Daily News*, 15/8/22), which, in an editorial, makes the following reference to Northcliffe's death:—

"Next to the war, it is probably the most important fact in the history of this generation." What a callous lie! The most important fact in the history of this generation is the fact that hundreds of thousands—ay, millions—of human beings are dying of overwork and underfeeding in presence of wealth, and means of producing wealth, accumulated in quantities undreamt of in the world before. Beside this the death of a newspaper magnate sinks into insignificance.

The *Daily News* (15/8/22) whilst commenting on Northcliffe's death, made the following significant remarks:—

"His judgment of men was sound, with the result that he surrounded himself with a band of able colleagues and assistants, who did much to aid him in establishing and carrying on the

manifold undertakings of which he was the founder."

The above remarks may excuse us for making a little digression.

Turn to the life of any of the so-called "Great Men" produced by Capitalism, and it will be found that the tale is nearly always similar; they climbed to wealth and fame by appropriating the product of other men's brains.

In this connection two men in particular may be mentioned—Andrew Carnegie and Pierpont Morgan. Both acquired huge fortunes, and both accomplished this end by using the genius of others.

Carnegie, the "great" ironmaster, knew nothing of metallurgy, but employed those who did, and rose to affluence on the results of their genius. He successfully took the fruits of others' toil from the time he got control of Woodruff's invention of the embryonic Pullman car until his mills turned out steel made by the Bessemer process, the process discovered by a genius whose name is unknown.

Pierpont Morgan acquired much of his "fame" in connection with the organisation of combinations in the American railway industry. He is spoken of as having had a marvellous head for taking in the position of the affairs of a company almost at a glance. How did this "great" man do the trick? The following quotation from "The Life Story of J. Pierpont Morgan," by Carl Hovey (Heinemann), gives the key:—

"All credit for this series of railroad rehabilitations is by no means his alone; to one of his partners—the late Charles H. Coster—was assigned the task of solving the intricate and interwoven relations of railroad obligations, bonds, underlying bonds, collateral trust mortgages, and every other artificial form of securing a loan—and determining the amount fairly represented by each. Coster was a kind of rare genius, a sort of financial chemist, and possessed a gift of analysis in this new and difficult field; it often happened, when everyone else was baffled, that he alone was able to lay before his chief solutions clear and sound, which made it possible for Mr. Morgan to go ahead with his plans for a new structure" (p. 233).

That is how the trick was done! And that is the way the "prince of journalists" did the trick.

When the workers of the world own the product of their labours, there will be no need for one to steal the work of another. Each will take his part in the production of needful things, and each will share in the enjoyment of such things.

PRISON REFORM AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

Owing, partly at least, to the large but not surprising increase of crime which has followed the close of the war, much interest has of recent months been shown in prison treatment and punishment generally, and a fine opportunity has been afforded to reformers to prove that the present penal system has failed to reform the criminal or check the growth of crime. Their humanitarian demand for a new method has gained the more attention because of the demonstrable failure of the old.

Retired military officers, deprived of the twin joys of bullying their subordinates which their rank gave and of walking on "niggers," which is the white man's privilege in the outlying parts of "our" Empire, conspire equally sincerely with amiable old ladies of the upper class to clamour for the all round application of the lash as a cure for what appears to them to be lack of discipline.

The interest has been maintained by press stunts about the Home Secretary's alleged discrimination between poor and wealthy prisoners, and by the publicity given to various persons (including the C.O.'s) of a type not previously well represented in jail; while the "Daily Herald," without intentional humour, announces that it opposes capital punishment because "vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay" (7th July, 1922). Also an informative report has been issued by a Committee of the Labour Research Department.

While extensive knowledge of the facts is certainly possessed by many who have helped in the agitation, there has been a noticeable ignoring of important economic and class aspects.

The case made out against the present prison system is, considered alone, overwhelming. Experience shows that a very large percentage of first offenders who are committed to prison return again and again and become "habitual criminals." Yet in seeming paradox we have the testimony of many investigators that there is no special criminal type. Thomas Mott Osborne, prison reformer and sometime Governor of "Sing-Sing" and other American jails, writes that there is

"no radical difference between the minds of men in prison and mine. We are all, I discovered, potential criminals" (*Daily Herald*, July 1st, 1922).

Conditions make criminals and while some respond to degrading influences more readily than others, habitual criminals are in the main those who through prison treatment and associations have been prevented from regaining their lost positions, poor though these may have been.

Prison reformers have to combat a popular misconception which holds twentieth century prisons to be havens of rest. Lack of knowledge and the equally important lack of sympathetic imagination, make it hard for the average person to believe that imprisonment can still be incredibly cruel. He has probably read of the state of order and cleanliness which prevails, and of the good and sufficient food supply. He knows too that actual physical discomfort, whether of corporal punishment or of living conditions, have been largely abolished as part consequence of the efforts of an earlier generation of penal reformers. What he does not know, and finds difficult to accept, is that the sufferings which now exist are no less real, though apparently less tangible, than those which have been removed. Incidentally it is a signal mark of the futility of philanthropy that Howard and others who gave their lives to the work of destroying various evils should themselves have been responsible for the creation of others equally outrageous. These people observed that in the old debtors' jails the prisoners were herded together indiscriminately, with results far from beneficial to the less hardened and more impressionable. They agitated successfully for the institution of the cellular system which condemns each prisoner to the drab confinement of his own cell for by far the greater part of the day, never realising that severance from the friends and interests of the outside world was the most intolerable of the burdens prison imposed, and that for those who were in a position of helplessness and hopelessness the company of fellow prisoners did at least create an illusion of comradeship and help to make the isolation less galling. A writer in the "*Manchester Guardian*" (30th June, 1922) remarks that the

"physical filth and barbarity that characterised our gaols little more than a century ago have

been replaced by a system that, in its mental and moral effects upon the prisoner, constitutes but a more refined form of cruelty";

and Dr. Starkie, a police doctor, who has suffered imprisonment (he alleges innocently) and who has written on his experiences, describes prison with a strong journalistic flavour, but not inaccurately, as a "Living Tomb."

Another writer reviewing the above mentioned report, says:—

"Even a few months of imprisonment appears to be sufficient in many, if not most, cases to produce an effect upon memory, concentration, and the power of will. In the case of the long sentence prisoner, this process of deterioration may lead to premature senility, or a childish weakness of mind which renders him almost incapable of resuming normal life in any efficient capacity." (*Reynolds*, July 2nd, 1922).

Perhaps it is unfair to say that the prison authorities do *nothing* to help their charges. After lack of education, bad surroundings, poverty and insecurity of livelihood have combined to produce the criminal; and after confinement, the denial of recreation for the mind, and the brain-numbing prison tasks imposed, have reduced him to a state of acute mental anguish or stupidity, harmful busybodies are permitted to provide him with the pestilential literature of some religious tract society in an endeavour to reclaim his soul for the Lord.

In summing up, the "*Manchester Guardian*" writer quoted above, holds prisons utterly condemned by their

"depressing bareness, their perpetual silence, their monotonous uniformity, and the obtrusive and military discipline,"

and affirms of imprisonment that

"if conceived with the express object of unfitting a man for subsequent freedom, it could not have been more cunningly devised."

Yet it must be emphasised that while these charges are hardly capable of serious question, they do not go to the root of the matter.

The others who would make prison life more nearly what it was in the "good old days" are equally wide of the mark. Those who would reform the criminal by kindness and those who would flog him into virtue alike fail to understand the problem.

The truth is that neither of these groups has sought to explain the origin and existence of crime. Dr. Starkie says:—

"as a doctor, I know that the cures for crime

are the same as the remedies for all social disorders."

and he correctly adds that the problem, which has to be solved, of removing bad living conditions and providing proper education, makes the subject really a political one. Again, T. M. Osborne admits that

"anything done to improve social conditions will reduce crime,"

and it is a fairly widely recognised and easily understood phenomenon, that unemployment and distress are always accompanied by numerous crimes, especially by robbery.

Let us briefly examine the nature of the various things gathered under the one word crime.

The human race has its animal ancestors, and has its early condition with nature, certain instincts or instincts. development of the and they have persisted little modification under conditions of civilisation. These such as self-the food fo

that civilisation had altered man's savage nature. But let passions be stirred by war, fear be roused by disaster, and the threat of hunger or death and it is soon seen how little man has changed in this respect.

Other important characteristics have also been acquired. Men are by nature gregarious; it is natural for them to associate in communities. They have developed co-operation in production to its present far advanced stage, and in periods and empires of comparative stability, truly wonderful cultural edifices have been built on this foundation. In those primitive societies where social co-operation in production obtained, and the means of living, simple though they were, were held in common, this social solidarity and the human need for food and shelter were in conformity; but this condition long since ceased to be. The means of wealth production have become privately owned; and slave and slave owner, feudal proprietor and serf, and

finally wage-worker and capitalist have faced each other in conflict. The savage and his tribe, self-interest and the loyalty of kinship, were one; individual interests and thoughts of isolated existence were alike impossible. The various classes which have been dominant have had interests in opposition to those of their subject class, and their interests, their ideas, their codes of morality and ethics have prevailed throughout the particular society. The sense of social solidarity still shared by the oppressed has formed a useful buttress for their own oppression and at the same time has hidden the force on which ultimately it rested.

Not the community, but the capitalist class now owns the machinery of wealth production. This class lives on the proceeds of the robbery of the workers who, by their property-less condition, are compelled to operate that machinery for its owners, in return for doing which they receive as wages only part of the product. The capitalists, as a prime need, require to be maintained in possession, and that need is met by the State which controls the forces of society. Now crime consists roughly of two kinds of acts. Firstly those which are anti-social in the sense that they would conflict with the smooth working of any society, such, for instance, as murder and other attacks on persons; and secondly the more numerous and at present more important crimes which are actions detrimental to the interests and stability of the dominant class.

It has to be recognised that crime is a matter of definition in written law, or of the interpretation of custom, and not a questioning of the breach of some external and everlasting moral standard. The law itself arises directly out of, or has been adapted to, the needs of the ruling body. Vengeance is, in fact, not the Lord's, but the prerogative of the capitalist class.

This should not be confused with improper and prejudiced administration. While some Judges may, more or less, consciously allow their opinions to influence their decisions, this is probably rare and matters but little. It is the law, not its administration, which reflects its class origin. As Anatole France says:—

"the law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

But the millionaire just doesn't need to,

because his living is assured by the robbery of workers whom he pauperises.

Those who do not look below the surface are struck by the apparent inconsistency of the law. They point to the fact that men are hanged in peace time for killing their fellows, but that C.O.'s were imprisoned and threatened with death for refusing to kill; again, that there is only a difference of degree between ordinary robbery and the brigandish exploits of every civilised Empire against the territory and property of its civilised neighbours, or preferably, because it is safer, against the backward races. We, however, realising the supreme need for the ruling class to maintain their dominance, recognise that they can consistently, and in fact must, do all these things. Class government rests on force, and no government can or dare tolerate defiance from a minority, or even from one single individual, when such defiance threatens their supremacy. This is a rule to which there is no exception. No government can ignore it with impunity. The natural desire for food in hunger clashes with the property rights of the owners of the land and other means of food production. Thus it is easy to see how crimes against property have a direct economic basis and motive; but that is not the whole of the result of private ownership.

Not only does the starving man steal bread to allay his hunger, but through other disadvantages from which he as a worker suffers, his entire outlook on society may be distorted. The denial of proper education, decent living conditions, and opportunities of self-development produce indifference and actual hostility towards the restraints imposed by convention; and the consequent misdirection of instincts and desires denied proper outlet, gives rise to numerous other crimes, not themselves directly to be explained by the desire to live.

Most forms of crime then, other than those to which men are driven by poverty, owe their existence, or at least their aggravation to the numerous disadvantages suffered by the under dogs of society.

The present crime wave is therefore an instance of the chaos which has followed the rise of class division in society and the resulting conflict between the human needs of one section and the economic interests of the other. In this conflict the dis-

possessed class has to meet not only the might of the possessors but also the force of the accepted social regulations which, while appearing to have universal validity, really serve one class only.

Much of the activity of any Government must be devoted to regulating the day-to-day intercourse between its own subjects, for without such guarantee of security, trade and commerce would become impossible. Crimes against property by masses of striking workers or by individuals must be suppressed. This is true of democracies as of autocracies. It is imposed equally on the lately "rebel" Government of Ireland, as on the Bolsheviks; the Australian Labour Government has had to use State forces against strikers and maintain intact the prison system; and the Labour Party here, if it gets into power, must do the same or forfeit its right to govern. This necessity will remain while private property and consequent class government remain.

Faced then with the problem that many workers are seldom in a position of security or of employment at all, the Government must devise means of deterring them from turning to crime as a way out. They must make their places of detention for criminals worse than conditions outside. They have had fair success. Just as the military authorities undoubtedly succeeded in making military prisons and detention camps so hellish that few men would exchange the trenches for them, so the civil authorities have aimed at convincing the workers that semi-starvation is better than imprisonment.

Both the people who opposed the removal of the more barbaric army punishments and those who advocate greater severity in the treatment of civilian prisoners, are logical; but the latter fail because their method is now proving ineffective. The force of the conditions which induce to crime is so great that the old methods no longer serve. The war and the general loosening of restraints have had their effect. The ruling class must endeavour to solve this problem by changing the method; but most reformers forget that the problem they are considering is not the one which faces those who have the power to act. Not sympathy for the prisoners, but increased knowledge is behind the move of the capitalist class.

Mr. Osborne for instance:—

"believes in sending men to prison for crimes

Society could not allow them to throw monkey wrenches into its machinery. . . . I'm just a hard-headed business man who can't bear seeing good material going to waste anywhere. Society needs protection, and if society were protected by killing or putting prisoners in chains, I would advocate these methods. But it isn't."

Dean Inge puts his class position in a nutshell when he says:—

"With the exception of political criminals, whom I would treat with the utmost rigour, I advocate a determinist attitude towards crime. The treatment at first ought always to be curative."
(*Daily Herald*, July 14th, 1922).

In other words, political prisoners are men who deliberately attack the class privileges of Dean Inge and his kind, and must be beaten into submission. Ordinary criminals act blindly and may, many of them, be induced, if given the opportunity, to enter the "honest" occupation of providing profits for an employer. Reason dictates that a differentiation should be made, especially in view of the little result and high cost of maintaining prisons.

Experiments have shown that there is no need for the capitalist class to have to support a large "criminal" population. Many of those who have constantly returned to jail are there only because their record or their treatment has prevented them from entering the labour market on equal terms with other workers. Without therefore in any way lessening the deterrent nature of imprisonment, much of the great expense of keeping these misfits in prison can be got rid of if with proper training they can be made to starve submissively outside. This the capitalists can do, and in time will do.

The Socialist does not concern himself with it because it is not an agitation the workers can usefully support. His unconcern proceeds not from lack of sympathy for the victims, but from the knowledge that while the capitalists remain in power they will solve their own problem in their own way, and that the wider problem they cannot touch. Property crimes can be removed only by the removal of private ownership of the means of life and the political question of providing the education and surroundings without which self-restraint and social loyalty are impossible, can also be solved only by the preliminary conquest of power which shall enable the organised workers to set about building a new class-less social order. The efforts of penal reformers are in the meantime not

only futile for the end in view, but are also a hindrance to the Socialist propaganda which alone can remove the barriers to the very progress these reformers desire.

H.

"The materialistic doctrine, that men are the product of conditions and education, different men, therefore, the products of other conditions and changed education, forgets that circumstances may be altered by men and that the educator has himself to be educated. It necessarily happens, therefore, that society is divided into two parts, of which one is elevated above society. The occurrence simultaneously of a change in conditions and human activity can only be comprehended and rationally understood as a revolutionary fact."

—Marx.

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THE SOCIOLOGY OF REVOLUTIONS.

For some years there has been a "boom" in "Sociology." Not long ago the demand for books upon social affairs was so limited that the publication of small popular and cheap volumes of the kind which to-day and for the past few years have been so abundant was not a commercial proposition, except to publishing houses which specialised in such works. Before the war the output showed a marked increase. But that event which, overwhelming though it appeared in its day, we may now regard as a mere political episode hardly warranting, when compared with coming conflicts already hinted at by the "experts," the title of the "Great" War, gave a further impetus to the publication of "sociological" treatises, enquiries and text books—because as the problems of society multiply or intensify, so do the attempts to solve them.

Looking over the shelves of a public library one may find works on "Unemployment," "Poverty," "Taxation," "Industrial Management," "Trades' Unions," "Political Reform," the "Structure of the State," "Education." One will see ponderous works and slim handbooks about "Primitive Society," "Early Law and Custom," "Feudalism," "Mediæval Guilds," and the "Factory System." All these will contain *some* useful information. Some will be sound in viewpoint and contents while others will be comparatively worthless. In such a collection, however, one subject of enormous importance to the student of society, both in its present and its past evolution, will be found to be practically, if not completely ignored, and that subject is the "Sociology of Revolutions." Very few, if any, works will be devoted to the consideration of the place of social revolution in history, while those which mention the subject at all do so casually, hastily, and in an utterly unconvincing way.

Apart from the fact that "revolution" is always a delicate subject with bourgeois writers and particularly so, to the extent of taboo, at a time when social problems are in pressing need of solution, there is a strong theoretical reason for this "peculiar omission."

Revolutions are generally considered by the bourgeoisie "sociologist" to be something apart from the normal processes of society, as disturbing, intruding factors unrelated to the conditions ordinarily determining social evolution and therefore outside the "proper scope" of their "science."

This mistaken notion, although based fundamentally upon an unconscious bias and being, therefore, as the psychologist would say, a "rationalisation" promoted by a politico-economic "complex" is related theoretically to two of the basic ideas which form the usual stock-in-trade of bourgeois social science.

The first of these is that evolution is usually, if not always, a "slow" and at any rate an uniform process. This idea is utterly unsound. The terms "slow" and "fast" are—purely relative to some accepted standard of measurement when applied to evolution as to other aspects of motion. By what arbitrary standard are we to judge by comparison any evolutionary process to be slow or fast? The only general fact we know about universal evolution at all is that it shows no break in the continuous chain of cause and effect. The further notion that the rate of progression is uniform, is a pure fiction contradicted by facts from every branch of science.

The other fallacious idea which is common to orthodox writers on social science is that evolution must necessarily be governed by the same forces and take place in the same way and at the same rate in all the different branches of the social structure. This idea touches on the central problem in the study of the social revolution.

Marx was probably the first thinker to address himself to the solution of this problem, and in the introduction to his "Critique of Political Economy" (1859) will be found the summary of his conclusions, in which he shows what a revolution is and how it is brought about. This passage, which is given below, has become classic, and has been translated into practically every language spoken by civilised men:—

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of pro-

duction. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of Society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic, or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness: on the contrary, this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois methods of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from conditions surrounding the life of individuals in society; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of the bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation constitutes, therefore, the closing chapter of the prehistoric stage of human society" ("Critique of Political Economy," pages 11-13). R. W. H.

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"REMEDIES."

(Continued from page 199.)

fallacy has been exposed frequently in the columns of the *Socialist Standard*; it is now exposed in the most convincing way by experience. Two years have gone by during which the various remedies have been tried and the situation is now, if anything, worse than ever.

The process of recovery from a trade crisis is, we know from past experience, a slow and gradual one. But even if the most extravagant forecasts of those who, from time to time shout "Trade is reviving," were realised, it would be but the prelude to another period of depression. The history of capitalism has been an alternation of prosperity and stagnation, of boom and slump. The worker, forced to sell his labour power for an existence wage, is buffeted about by the varying winds of supply and demand; overworked at one period, unemployed at another; his existence becoming ever more insecure, a slave to the capitalist class, he is the victim of the present system of society. This has been the lot of the worker under capitalism and his position must become worse as the system develops.

There is but one remedy for the poverty, unemployment and overwork suffered by the working class. It is the socialisation of the means of production and distribution, which are now owned by the capitalist class (a small minority in society) and used exclusively for their benefit.

The initial step towards the realisation of this object, fellow workers, is, once understanding your slave position in society and desiring your emancipation, to organise yourself along with us in the Socialist Party and help to bring to a close this system of slavery. J. D.

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.**OBJECT.**

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles.**THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.